

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
January 3, 2020 Special Meeting

**Present:**

Maureen Bell, Selectwoman  
Peter Chamberlain, Selectman  
Kathy Jungermann, Auditor  
Richard Paré, Road Foreman  
Gail Wyman, Asst. Treasurer

Kord Scott, Selectman  
Joyce Cumming, Selectboard Clerk  
Imme Maurath, Auditor  
Kathy Scott, Treasurer

**Call to order**

Maureen called the meeting to order at 9:00.a.m.

**Public Comment**

No comments were made.

**Roads Budget:**

Road expenses for 2019 were reviewed by line item (see attached). Imme questioned why some line items did not include a recommended budget amount for 2020 (i.e. lines 21-29); Kathy explained that a lump sum budget amount was proposed (see line 30) in those instances. Likewise, lines 35-51 did not show a 2020 budget recommendation for each line but a lump sum budget amount was reflected on line 52. This lump sum approach allows more flexibility to address needs as they arise. Savings are anticipated for workers comp insurance (proposed at \$9,100 for 2020; a reduction of \$2,228 from the 2019 budget of \$11,328) and property insurance (proposed at \$7,850 for 2020; a reduction of \$4,714 from the 2019 budget of \$12,564). All line items for road crew payroll (regular pay, overtime pay, and town contributions toward retirement and FICA) were proposed at level funding for 2020. Kathy explained that while these accounts came in at less than budgeted for 2019, an increase is anticipated in the town contribution towards the State pension plan next year. Staffing expense also needs to be considered based on the additional ditching and culvert work required for the Road Erosion Inventory. The REI is being conducted by Windham Regional Commission and paid for by grant monies. Brief discussion followed on the changes in stream management and the current (pun intended) recommendation to leave fallen tree limbs in the waterway. The budget for Road Material was proposed for level funding at \$128,950. Within this category, the expense for salt is under budget by approx. \$14,400 this year, while the expense for road stone exceeded the budgeted amount. The Supplies budget category was proposed for lump sum level funding at \$4,000. The budget for Utilities was also proposed for level funding at \$9,500.

The 2020 recommended budget for Roads totals \$482,520, a reduction of \$14,564 from the 2019 budgeted total of \$497,084. 2019 YTD expenses for Roads total \$456,549.

Discussion followed on Bridges and Culverts, which was adequately funded in 2019 for the work needed in preparation for repaving. Partial funding for the Route 121 culvert project is available through grants of \$175,000 and \$60,000 which will expire this summer if not used. Funding is still short by \$115,000 based on the total project cost of \$350,000. Another grant application was submitted for \$123,000; no word has been received yet on the status of the grant decision. Kathy recommended borrowing the remaining \$115,000 if

necessary rather than losing the \$235,000 available in grant funds. Kathy noted that the Garage Maintenance & Improvement account has a balance of approximately \$85,000, some of which could be moved to Bridges & Culverts if necessary.

Maureen brought up the topic of heating the Meeting House and whether it would be more cost effective to leave the thermostat at a set temperature rather than turning it up in advance of a meeting and setting it back afterwards. In the case of radiant heat systems, leaving the thermostat at a set temperature is more cost effective. Whether any cost savings would be realized at the Meeting House (which does not use radiant heat) is not known. After further discussion of temperature degree days and the difficulty of comparing month to month costs, Kord suggested forwarding the issue to the Energy Commission for analysis.

Kathy reported that in some cases, budget transfers between accounts can address shortfalls. The Windham Weatherization fund has a balance of approximately \$5,800 which could be transferred if approved by the Energy Commission. Imme noted some monies available in designated accounts, such as approximately \$5,000 in interest earned in the Commercial Loggers account. Kathy mentioned that there is also \$2,000 in designated funds for NEMRC, approximately \$18,000 in the Listers' reserve account for re-appraisal, and approximately \$9,000 designated for a professional audit which is not mandated. Article approval would be required to utilize these funds, except for interest earned, for a purpose other than as originally appropriated. Kathy will look into fund balances that might be used to offset the 2020 budget.

Brief discussion followed on funding for a truck to replace the 550. Kathy suggested using some of the 2019 year-end balance in the Roads budget and applying it toward the equipment fund. For example, assuming \$35,000 remains in the Road budget after all expenses for 2019, \$15,000 might be returned to the Town and \$20,000 might be applied to the equipment fund. This would then reduce the amount of the appropriation request via article from \$60,000 to \$40,000. In response to a question from Peter about the amount to replace the 550, Kord responded that a replacement truck would be approximately \$110,000 or \$120,000 with an extended warranty. An article was approved to appropriate \$60,000 last year; another article would need to be approved at the next Town Meeting to appropriate the balance.

Budget review of Winter/Summer Roads and Garage M&I is slated for the January 6 Selectboard Meeting. The Social Services budget will be reviewed on either January 6 or at a proposed January 13 special meeting.

Kord noted that the Selectboard is focusing on the budget issues it can control. The school education funding issue is beyond the Town's control. He cited the need for support from residents to address the school funding formula at the State level. He also suggested developing a coalition with towns facing similar education funding burdens including mandated pre-school Special Education costs.

### **Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the special Selectboard meeting at 10:08 a.m.—moved by Kord—all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Cumming  
Selectboard Clerk

Attachment:  
-- Roads Budget Proposed for 2020